

Message Text

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT ATHENS 01112, SENT ACTION SECSTATE DTD 10 FEB 75.

QUOTE:

S E C R E T ATHENS 1112

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR GR

SUBJECT: US-GREEK NEGOTIATIONS

REF: STATE 29578

1. THE US AND GREEK DELEGATIONS CONVENED AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AT 1000 ON 10 FEB 1975. AMBASSADOR CALOGERAS, CHAIRMAN OF GREEK DELEGATION, READ FROM A PREPARED STATEMENT (SEPTTEL TO FOLLOW). FOLLOWING THE AMBASSADOR'S STATEMENT, MINISTER STEARNS SAID THAT US SIDE WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS OCCASION AND THAT IT WAS A REAL OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN THE GREEK/AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP, WHICH HAD BEEN HARDENED IN BATTLE AND STRENGTHENED IN PEACE. STEARNS ADDED THAT AS CONDITIONS CHANGE, SO DO RELATIONSHIPS, AND AS A RESULT RELATIONSHIPS REQUIRE REVIEW AND DISCUSSION. THE US SIDE WAS PREPARED TO DISCUSS ANY ASPECT OF THE BILATERAL SECURITY SITUATION. HE

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NOTED THAT ALL THE FACILITIES AND AGREEMENTS ARE, WITHOUT

EXCEPTION, USEFUL AND VALUABLE TO THE US AND THAT HE HOPED AND BELIEVED THEY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SECURITY OF GREECE. DRAWING FULLY ON GUIDANCE IN STATE 29578, HE SAID THAT IN THE SPIRIT OF THE DISCUSSION, THE US SIDE DID NOT QUESTION THE VALUE OF THE RELATIONSHIP ITSELF, BUT RATHER PROCEEDED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT US/GREEK RELATIONS WERE COMPATIBLE AND COMPLEMENTARY. WE LOOK TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS WHICH, WHILE RESPECTING THE SOVEREIGNTY AND DIGNITY OF GREECE, RECOGNIZE THE NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE US AND WILL CONTRIBUTE TO A DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES. STEARNS SAID THAT IN NATO AS IN OUR BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS OUR ASSUMPTION WILL BE THAT GREEK AND ALLIED, INCLUDING US INTERESTS ARE COMPATIBLE AND NOT IN CONFLICT AND OUR HOPE REMAINED THAT GREECE WOULD RESUME A FULL ROLE IN THE ALLIANCE. STEARNS ALSO SAID THAT, IN US VIEW, ALL EXISTING AGREEMENTS REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL CHANGES ARE NEGOTIATED. GREEK SIDE DID NOT RPT NOT OBJECT TO THIS STATEMENT. STEARNS CLOSED HIS REMARKS BY STATING THAT THE US SIDE HAD A LISTENING BRIEF AND AWAITED AN ELUCIDATION OF THE GREEK POSITION.

2. AMBASSADOR CALOGERAS RESPONDED BY STATING THAT THE GREEKS FIRST CONCERN IS TO DETERMINE WHICH OF THE AGREEMENTS WILL COME UNDER SCRUTINY, WHICH WAS NOT AN EASY TASK. HE STATED THAT THE GREEK SIDE WAS HAVING TROUBLE DETERMINING HOW MANY AGREEMENTS THERE WERE, AND THEY HAD BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY 40; THEY WISHED TO CHECK THEIR LIST WITH THE US LIST TO DETERMINE WHAT WOULD BE DISCUSSED. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY A BRIEF EFFORT AT COMPARING THE TWO LISTS, FOLLOWING WHICH STEARNS SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE BETTER IF A SMALL GROUP DRAWN FROM BOTH SIDES WERE TO SIT IN A SEPARATE SESSION TO COMPARE THE TWO LISTS AND REACH A COMMON LIST OF AGREEMENTS.

3. STEARNS THEN ASKED AMB CALOGERAS IF HE WAS PREPARED TO AMPLIFY HIS VIEWS ON ANY OF THE FUNDAMENTAL AGREEMENTS. AMB CALOGERAS HAD NOTHING TO ADD AT THAT TIME AND STATED THAT THE LIST OF PROBLEM AREAS HE HAD MENTIONED IN HIS OPENING REMARKS WAS NOT

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RESTRICTIVE, OF COURSE, AND THAT EVERY ITEM WOULD BE SUBJECT TO DISCUSSION. STEARNS STATED THAT THE SKEIN OF AGREEMENTS WAS RATHER TANGLED AT THIS TIME AND THE FIRST PROBLEM PERAPS WAS PROCEDURAL. HE PROPOSED THAT IN ORDER TO SAVE THE GREEK SIDE, IN KEEPING WITH THE CATEGORIES OF AGREEMENTS MENTIONED IN EARLIER STATEMENTS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, IDENTIFY THOSE THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT BELIEVED CLEARLY SERVED

GREEK INTERESTS AND DID NOT REQUIRE REVISION, THOSE THAT IN GOG VIEW DID NOT SERVE GREEK INTERESTS AND MIGHT REQUIRE ABROGATION, AND THOSE WHICH SERVED MUTUAL INTERESTS BUT MIGHT NEED SOME REVISION. STEARNS REMINDED CALOGERAS THAT IN HIS OPENING REMARKS, HE HAD MENTIONED HELLENIKON AIRPORT AND HOMEPORTING, BOTH OF WHICH WERE USEFUL AND CONVENIENT FROM THE US SIDE. STEARNS STATED THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THE GREEK SIDE COULD BE AS SPECIFIC AND DETAILED AS POSSIBLE IN DISCUSSING THESE AND OTHER RELATED AGREEMENTS AND PLACING THEM IN THE CATEGORIES SET UP BY THE PRIME MINISTER.

4. STEARNS SUGGESTED THAT SMALL GROUP COMPARE THE LISTS, TO IDENTIFY THOSE THAT WE WOULD NOT BE CONCERNED WITH AND ISOLATE THE BASIC AGREEMENTS THAT NEEDED REVISION. CALOGERAS AGREED THAT IT FIRST WAS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH A LIST DETERMINING WHAT TEXTS WOULD BE DISCUSSED. CALOGERAS SUGGESTED AN EVENING MEETING THE SAME DAY BETWEEN TWO SUB-GROUPS TO ESTABLISH A COMMON LIST OF AGREEMENTS. STEARNS STATED THAT THE QUICKER THIS COULD BE ESTABLISHED AND THE CATEGORIES DETERMINED, THE SOONER WASHINGTON TEAM COULD RETURN AND SECURE A WASHINGTON REACTION. BOTH TEAM LEADERS AGREED THAT SUCH PREPARATORY TIME IN THE BEGINNING WAS MOST IMPORTANT IN ORDER TO SAVE TIME IN LATER, MORE SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS. CALOGERAS THANKED THE AMERICAN TEAM, STATED AGAIN THAT THE GREEK POSITION WAS ONE OF FRANKNESS, AND HOPED IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO PROCEED IN A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION WITH AN AGREEMENT MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TO BOTH SIDES.

PRESENT SCHEDULE CALLS FOR DISCUSSION BY SMALL WORKING GROUPS FEB 10-11, WITH NEXT PLENARY SESSION SET FOR
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FEB 12.

5. COMMENT: IT IS REASONABLY CLEAR FROM OUR FIRST SESSION THAT RELATIVELY LITTLE PREPARATORY WORK HAS BEEN DONE BY THE GREEK SIDE. AT AMBASSADOR'S LUNCHEON FOR TWO NEGOTIATING TEAMS FOLLOWING INITIAL MEETING, CALOGERAS TOLD STEARNS THAT HIS ONLY GUIDELINES WERE THOSE PROVIDED BY CARAMANLIS FEB 8 AT MEETING ATTENDED BY BITSIOS, AVEROFF, AND VARVITSIOTIS AS WELL AS BY CALOGERAS. PM'S ADVICE EVIDENTLY DID NOT GO BEYOND HIS EARLIER PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO THE EFFECT THAT GREECE WANTED TO RETAIN AGREEMENTS SERVING ITS DEFENSE INTERESTS, ELIMINATE THOSE NOT SERVING GREEK DEFENSE, AND REVISE OTHER AGREEMENTS WHICH CONTAINED PROVISIONS UNACCEPTABLE TO GREECE. CALOGERAS NOTED THAT GREEK TEAM HAD BEEN PULLED TOGETHER

HASTILY AND HE CONSIDERED IT UNFORTUNATE THAT GROUP HAD NOT MET WITH CARAMANLIS EARLIER TO OBTAIN MORE PRECISE EXPRESSION OF PM'S INTENTIONS. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES CALOGERAS SAID THAT AT FIRST SESSION THIS MORNING HE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO DO MORE THAN PROVIDE ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF FACILITIES AND OR AGREEMENTS THAT POSED PROBLEMS FOR THE GREEKS, I.E., HELLENIKON FACILITIES, HOMEPORTING AND SOUDA. HE VOLUNTEERED THAT GREEKS ALSO HAD IN MIND RENEGOTIATING 1956 SOFA TO BRING IT INTO LINE WITH NATO SOFA. IN REPLY STEARNS SAID THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR GREEK SIDE TO IDENTIFY WHAT IT REGARDED AS PROBLEM AREAS. WORKING GROUPS SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON THIS TO ENABLE PLENARY SESSION FEB 12 TO PROCEED ON MEANINGFUL BASIS.

6. IN FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WE WILL ENCOURAGE THE GREEKS TO IDENTIFY MORE SPECIFICALLY ASPECTS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP THAT GIVE THEM PROBLEMS. OUR POSITION WILL CONTINUE TO BE THAT SINCE IT IS THE GREEK SIDE WHICH CLAIMS TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE, IT MUST BE THE GREEK SIDE WHICH STATES WHERE THE SHOE PINCHES.

7. UNTIL THE GREEKS BECOME MORE SPECIFIC IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO SAY WITH ANY ASSURANCE HOW SIGNIFICANT THEIR PROPOSED REVISIONS IN EXISTING AGREEMENTS ARE LIKELY TO BE. REFERENCES TO HELLENIKON AND SOUDA COULD PRESAGE THE EMERGENCE OF CRUCIAL ISSUES FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD, ALTHOUGH
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THE FACT THAT THESE INSTALLATIONS WERE BRACKETED WITH HOMEPORTING MAY IMPLY THAT THEY WERE SINGLED OUT BECAUSE THEY WERE CONSPICUOUS BOTH PHYSICALLY AND POLITICALLY AND NOT RPT NOT NECESSARILY BECAUSE THEY PRESENT FUNCTIONAL OR CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS FOR THE GREEKS. CERTAINLY, IN VIEW OF EARLIER INDICATIONS BY BITSIOS AND TZOUNIS THAT THE GOG DOES NOT WANT TO CRIPPLE OUR ESSENTIAL OPERATIONS IN GREECE, IT IS TOO EARLY TO CONCLUDE THAT THEY WANT DEEP CUTS IN KEY FACILITIES.
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